AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method that employs a processor at a replier for responding to a request for a supplier quotation (RFQ) indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services by the supplier ~~by employing a processor capable of executing instructions~~, the method comprising:

using the processor at the replier to access an index by executing processor instructions, wherein the index is stored in a first data store on a remotely located computer storage media, the first data store being remote from the replier, the index having one entry for each of a plurality of RFQs, each entry including ~~identification~~ index information related to the RFQ with which it is associated, each of the RFQs being generated by an RFQ generator that is resident at one of a plurality of requesters and each of the RFQs being stored at one of a plurality of data stores remotely located from the first data store and wherein the ~~identification~~ index information for each entry in the index is provided to the index by the RFQ generator that generated the RFQ and stored the RFQ at one of the plurality of data stores remotely located from the first data store with which the entry is associated;

using the processor at the replier to identify an RFQ for reply, by filtering entries in the index of RFQs based on supplier filter criteria to create a subset of entries that meet the supplier filter criteria and selecting an entry in the index from the subset of entries, including identifying, from information in the selected index entry, a second data store in which the identified RFQ is stored from one of the plurality remotely located data stores;

using the processor to retrieve the identified RFQ from the second data store; and

using the processor to generate a reply to the retrieved RFQ by providing information requested in ~~an RFQ template associated with~~ the retrieved RFQ.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method of claim 1 and further comprising:

    after retrieving the identified RFQ, using the processor to apply detailed supplier filter criteria to the retrieved RFQ based on a content of the retrieved RFQ.

4. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim-3 wherein generating a reply, comprises:

    generating a reply to the retrieved RFQ only if it meets the detailed supplier filter criteria.

5. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method of claim 1 and further comprising:

    using the processor to transmit the reply to the requester that generated the retrieved RFQ.

6. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein generating the reply comprises:

    accessing content of the retrieved RFQ; and

    generating the reply based on the content of the RFQ.

7. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method of claim 6 wherein generating the reply comprises:

    automatically generating the reply based on the content of the RFQ without human intervention.

8. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein accessing the index, comprises:

    accessing the index over a global computer network.

9. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 1 wherein retrieving the identified RFQ, comprises:

    retrieving the identified RFQ from the data store at the requester over a global computer network.

10. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method of claim 1 and further comprising:

> prior to accessing the index, using the processor to provide supplier registration information to a registration component; and
>
> using the processor to download a reply engine, the reply engine accessing the index.

11. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method that solicits a response to a request for supplier quotation (RFQ), the RFQ being generated by a processor at a requester and including job information indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services from a supplier to the requester, the method comprising:

> providing supplier registration information from the requester to a registration component and downloading an RFQ generation engine to the requester;
>
> after the RFQ generation engine is downloaded to the requester, using the RFQ generation engine at the requester to enter entering the job information into a predetermined RFQ template;
>
> using the processor to save the RFQ template at a predetermined location in a data store local to a computer system at the requester, such that the RFQ template is exposed for downloading to a supplier for generation of the response; and
>
> using the processor to send indexing information related to the RFQ template to an index remote from the computer system of the requester when the RFQ template is saved at the data store local to the requester without prompting from the remote index, wherein the remote index is accessible by one or more supplier computer systems, wherein each index entry identifies an RFQ for which the requestor requester thereof solicits a response, and wherein the indexing information identifies the data store where the RFQ template is stored.

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method that solicits a response to a request for supplier quotation (RFQ), the RFQ being generated by a processor at a requester and

~~including job information indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services from a supplier to the requester, the method comprising~~ The computer implemented method of claim 11 ~~:~~

entering the job information into a predetermined RFQ template, wherein entering the job information comprises[[:]] entering requester filter criteria indicative of suppliers authorized to reply to the RFQ template;

~~using the processor to save the RFQ template at a predetermined location in a data store local to a computer system at the requester, such that the RFQ template is exposed for downloading to a supplier for generation of the response; and~~

~~using the processor to send indexing information related to the RFQ template to an index remote from the computer system of the requester when the RFQ template is saved at the data store local to the requester without prompting from the remote index, wherein the remote index is accessible by one or more supplier computer systems, wherein each index entry identifies an RFQ for which the requester thereof solicits a response, and wherein the indexing information identifies the data store where the RFQ template is stored.~~

14. (Currently Amended) The computer implemented method of claim ~~11~~ 13 wherein sending indexing information comprises:

sending requester filter criteria indicative of suppliers authorized to reply to the RFQ template.

15. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 11 and further comprising:
receiving a reply to the RFQ template from a supplier.

16. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 15 wherein entering the job information comprises:

entering award criteria indicative of criteria considered in awarding a job corresponding to the RFQ to a supplier.

17. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 16 and further comprising:

evaluating the received reply based on the award criteria; and

suggesting a winning supplier based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

18. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 17 wherein evaluating comprises:

weighting the award criteria according to a predetermined weight.

19. (Previously Presented) A computer implemented method that employs a processor to maintain an index of requests for supplier quotations (RFQs), each of the RFQs being computer generated by a requester and including job information indicative of terms for delivery of goods or services from a supplier to the requester, the method comprising:

using the processor to receive indexing information for each RFQ from the requester without prompting from the requester, the indexing information being provided by an RFQ generator at the requester that generated the RFQ and being indicative of the RFQ stored at a requester data store local to a computer system at the requester; and

using the processor to enter an entry in the index in a data store on a computer storage media remote from the requester computer system for each RFQ based on the index information, the entry being indicative of a category of a corresponding RFQ and a location of the corresponding RFQ on the requester data store, the index being exposed to access by suppliers.

20. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 19 wherein entering an entry comprises, for each entry in the index, including filter criteria accessible by the suppliers to identify RFQs for reply.

21-35. (Canceled)

36. (New) The computer implemented method of claim 11 wherein using the RFQ generation engine at the requester to enter the job information comprises:

entering requester filter criteria indicative of suppliers authorized to reply to the RFQ template.

37. (New) The computer implemented method of claim 11 wherein using the processor to send indexing information comprises:

sending requester filter criteria indicative of suppliers authorized to reply to the RFQ template.